

WHY EPOSSUMONDAS HAS NO HAIR ON HIS TAIL

BY COLEEN SALLEY

CALIFORNIA CONTENT STANDARDS

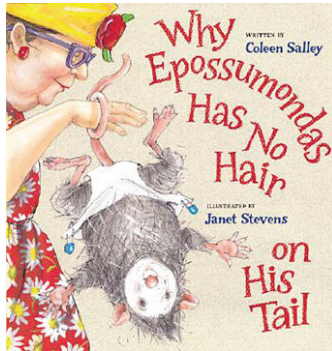
Kindergarten: Reading Comprehension 2.2 Use pictures and context to make predictions about story content.

Grade One: Reading Comprehension 2.2 Respond to who, what, when, where, and how questions. 2.3 Follow one-step written instructions.

Grade Two: Reading Comprehension 2.4 Ask clarifying questions about essential textual elements of exposition [e.g., why, what if, how]. Reading Comprehension 2.5 Restate facts and details in the text to clarify and organize ideas.

Grade Three: Reading Comprehension 2.2 Ask questions and support answers by connecting prior knowledge with literal information found in, and inferred from, the text. 2.3 Demonstrate comprehension by identifying answers in the text. 2.4 Recall major points in the text and make and modify predictions about forthcoming information.

Grade Four: Reading Comprehension 2.1 Identify structural patterns found in informational text (e.g., compare and contrast, cause and effect, sequential or chronological order, proposition and support) to strengthen comprehension. 2.2 Use appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes (e.g., full comprehension, location of information, personal enjoyment).



GRADES: K - 4

READING LEVEL: 3.3

OBJECTIVES:

1. Define what a persimmon is, describing at least 3 characteristics they possess.
2. Explain 3 benefits for having fruits as snacks.
3. Name at least 3 examples of tree fruits.

ABOUT THIS LESSON...

This folktale is a fun way to expose students to a relatively uncommon fruit - the persimmon. This lesson speaks of them in the context of: 1) where they come from (trees), and 2) how they can fulfill our body's cravings for nutrition (healthful, satisfying snack), and 3) the importance of variety.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD

Ask students about the role that food plays in helping their bodies (energy, nourishment, growth). When they are hungry, and want something easy and fast, which foods do they grab for? Discuss their responses and speak about the nutrition in foods like chips and cakes vs. the nutrition in a piece of fruit. Have the class cite favorite fruit examples. Ask them if they are familiar with a fruit called a persimmon. Then, read this tall tail, er *tale*.

WHAT IS A PERSIMMON?

Based on the story, and their previous experience, ask students to describe a persimmon. A Circle Map® can be used to record their thoughts as they help define this fruit (an example has been provided with ideas based on the story). Furthermore, like other fruits, persimmons provide our bodies with the following nutrition:

- **Vitamin A:** Overall eye health, including night vision
- **Vitamin C:** Helps heal cuts, prevent bruising and fight infection
- **Potassium:** Aids in muscle contractions, nerve impulses, and kidney and heart function
- **Fiber:** Digestive system health, helps keep energy levels steady, may help lower cholesterol levels



This material was funded by USDA's Food Stamp Program through the California Department of Public Health, Network for a Healthy California. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help buy nutritious foods for a better diet. For information on the Food Stamp Program, call (323) 727-4542. Contract # 06-55103.



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LESSON CONT.

RRRRRRR!

How did Papapossum know he was hungry? What food did he reach for to quench his hunger? Expand upon the earlier discussion regarding the healthful benefits of fruit vs. those foods of low nutritional value.

Fruits are excellent snacks because they are a good source of nutrients including carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and water; and they are low in calories, yet filling because of their high fiber content, preventing you from ruining your appetite for the next meal. Furthermore, fruits are natural, and don't have additives or preservatives like many other packaged snacks... this means there's less processing, making it not only more healthful, but more ecologically friendly as well!

THANK GOODNESS FOR TREE FRUITS!

After losing his fluffy tail, Papapossum shares that his stomach wasn't so fond of persimmons. Why was that? Perhaps he was just traumatized by the incident, or maybe he was tired of eating persimmons, and wanted some variety. Fortunately for Papapossum and for us, there isn't only one kind of tree fruit, but many! And to make things even better, different varieties of tree fruits are available at different times of the year, ensuring we never get bored! Have students brainstorm the diverse examples of tree fruit and the seasons in which they see them; a Tree Map® example has been supplied here.

Why is variety so important? If we eat nothing more than just a few select fruits and vegetables, we potentially miss out on another powerful mixture of nutrients provided by the overlooked ones (not to mention what a drag it would be to eat the same thing over and over again!). Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is essential to enabling our bodies to function in the way they are meant to, and allows the process to be fun at the same time!

RECAP

Ask students to define what a persimmon is, describing its characteristics, and sharing why they make an excellent snack. Have them make a goal over the next week to eat persimmons, or perhaps another tree fruit in season.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Ask students to develop a tall tale about how the persimmon obtained one or more of its characteristics (its shiny, smooth, orange skin, why it grows on trees, why it grows during the fall season, etc).
- Read a tree fruit book like "Trees are Terrific" by Sandra Stotksy, or "Tall and Tasty Fruit Trees" by Meredith Sayles.
- Incorporate a snack recipe for a persimmon taste test (use firm Fuyus as a "cracker" and pair with other fruits or lowfat cheese; pair Fuyu with a crisp vegetable and a dip; add sliced or shredded persimmons to a mixed greens salad.
- Utilize a Double Bubble Map® or Venn Diagram to compare and contrast a persimmon with another tree fruit.



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ACTIVITIES

CIRCLE MAP® EXAMPLE



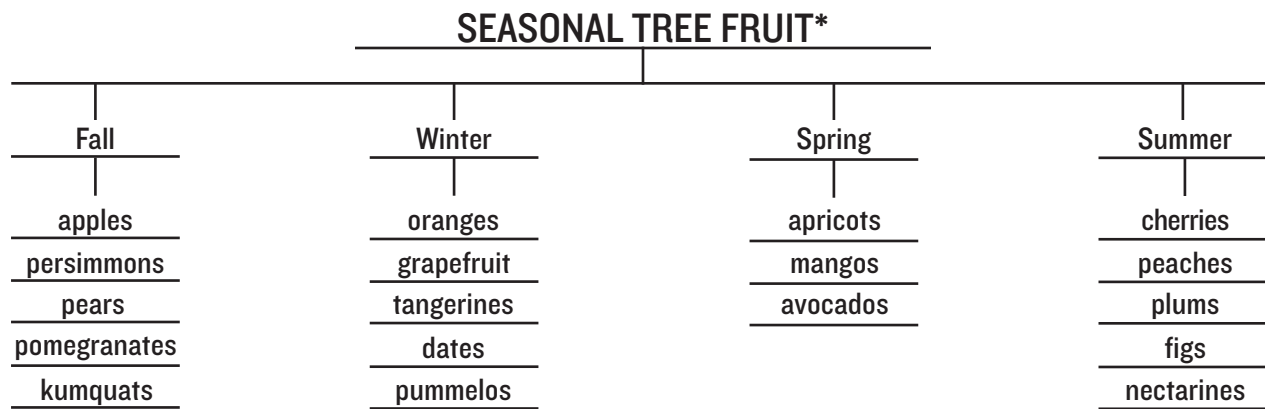
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ACTIVITIES

TREE MAP® EXAMPLE



* Fruit listed may be available more than one season. Taken from "What's In Season?" www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/?page_id=674.



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